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Redeem the Cities

A FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION AND REHABILITATION

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I. Statement of the Problem

In 1966 when activists from Newark, Jersey City and Paterson began to talk about organizing a tri-city coalition for black self development, hopes were high for a public policy that could bring life back into the cities.

The War on Poverty was still acknowledging the right of poor people to self determination. The middle class citizenry, both black and white, were actively participating in civic and political affairs in the cities. The federal government was still on the defensive about its obligations to poor people and to the cities.

This new organization called itself Tri-City Citizens Union for Progress and adopted the theme of "Redeem the Cities". The membership was convinced that black power rhetoric had to be translated into meaningful programs that put buying power and decision making power into the hands of minority people in the urban centers.

Redeeming the cities also meant that city governments had to gear themselves to working through and with local communities. So much of turning a city around involved the active participation of residents. A government could no longer effectively deliver its services from a centralized administration whether they were planning a new elementary school or weekly garbage collection.

The rhetoric and discussions accepted these three premises as basic to rebuilding the cities. After the civil disorders in 1967 in Newark and other cities, the talk intensified. The President's Commission on Civil Disorders reaffirmed that direction. Organizations like Tri-City Citizens were recognized as being needed to get the job done.

However, in 1968 a new federal administration declared that the War on Poverty was over. The cities had received enough attention and funding. The war in the far east was raging. White activists found another cause to champion.

Minority peoples, especially Afro Americans, began to expound a separatist line. Color rather than economics became the dominant theme. Blacks and whites were losing a common ground on which to struggle. Discussions about decentralization and local control caused open racial conflicts. The federal government pulled out of affecting local changes and gave almost complete autonomy to state governments through its revenue sharing policy.

The net result is that ten years later, the cities are in deeper trouble than ever before. There are fewer leaders willing to work on a coalition basis with poor people. The streets are more dangerous as unemployment increases, drug addiction goes unchecked and the numbers of out-of-school youth escalates. People are virtual prisoners in their own homes.

Statement of the Problem (con't.)

Police security is not viewed as a real source of help to residents. Police calls are frequently not answered in time to be of relief. When citizens lodge complaints to police authorities they are told that the security demand is far greater than police budgets can handle. They have no solution to the problem.

Other city agencies are over loaded as well. Nothing seems to be functioning properly.

In 1967 when our work started in this neighborhood in Newark, we were talking confidently of becoming a model for neighborhood preservation. This was accomplished. However, the public policy needed by the city, state and federal did not ensue to build on our demonstration. Too little, too late now forces us to talk about neighborhood rehabilitation rather than preservation. What we have been able to accomplish is in danger of being overrun by the rapid rate of deterioration of housing and other stabilizing factors in the area.

As we have become aware of the neighborhood government movement it has given us a conceptual model on which to develop our thinking for the future. Our future in this neighborhood is to stop the blight and deterioration by building an effort which will have impact on the unorganized sections of the area.

II. The Ten Year Model: What has the Citizens Union for Progress Accomplished?

Citizens Union for Progress - The parent organization has provided the continuity and stability for programs in the past 10 years. The daily work is supervised by the Executive Director, Director for Economic Development, Finance Director and Program Director. These directors with the assistance of the office staff:

1. Provide staff work for the Board, Trust Fund and Policy Committee.

2. Prepare monthly financial reports for the Boards and public agencies.

3. Supervise and train managerial level staff who head projects.

4. Prepare proposals and direct fund raising efforts.

5. Recruit and train staff for new projects.

6. Provide technical assistance to committees when needed: train supervisors in how to work with policy making committees..

7. Provide technical assistance to other organizations as part of our coalition building work.

The Ten Year Model (con't.)

Following is a summary of the projects we have been able to establish and maintain.

Amity Village Cooperative is made up of 96 families who elect an Executive Board. The Co-op is carrying a 35 year mortgage with city approved tax abatement. The major projects it is now involved in are a building managers effort intended to upgrade maintenance of the building and a campaign to prevent a 300% (!) increase in its liability insurance. The Tri-City Citizens Union serves as managing agent.

Amity Village 2A is made up of 201 families. The property is currently owned and managed by the Citizens Union with a goal to convert it into a cooperative by 1978. Much time is being spent meeting with the tenants of 38 different buildings and forming tenant committees in each cluster of buildings.

Bicultural Day Care - 30 children ages 2 - 5 years: 30% Hispanic. Children are served from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. while their parents are working or in school. The program concentrates on language arts, math concepts, physical development and citizenship. Parents participate on a one-to-one basis to discuss the progress of their children as well as in committees. They are also active in fundraising activities.

Kindergarten/After School - 65 children, ages 6 - 9 years. Kindergartners are served from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; after schoolers from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

In addition to the learning program, each child receives a complete check-up at the Tri-City Children's Health Action Project. Parents have access to community services through counseling and referral. Ongoing services are provided to the cneter by the Community Mental Health Center of the College of Medicine and Dentistry.

Community Health Education - preventive health care through annual check-ups and nutrition counseling is emphasized. Neighborhood women serving as Health Block Workers, visit families in the 12 Square Block area urging them to use the clinics if they do not have a regular health care facility. The Health Block Workers also follow-up on women or children determined to have health problems. They also sponsor health education sessions for residents or provide transportation to residents to attend sessions outside of the neighborhood. Without this outreach component few people would respond to the preventive health care approach. People are oriented towards crises and treatment.

Children's Health Action Project - provides a complete physical examination and lab tests to children in the neighborhood as well as to other day care centers who lack health care facilities. The examination is done by a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner who spends a great deal of time getting a history from the parent(s) and results of the various tests and examinations. The goal is to better inform parents so that they can tend to their children's needs. Assistance is given on referrals to treatment sites and in follow-up. The clinic staff have bilingual members, including the PNP. The consulting physician speaks Spanish and is able to communicate directly with Hispanic parents. Services offered are: physical examination, lead, diabetes, T.B., blood pressure, vision, hearing , and speech.

Women's Health Action Project - since preventive health care is emphasized women's health is very important, not only from the prenatal care aspect but also from the food preparation stand point. Since low income women are primarily responsible for food purchase and preparation, winning them over to good nutritional practices affects the entire family.

The women's clinic offers: an internal examination, including PAP and gonorrhea tests, serology, TB, diabetes, blood pressure, height and weight, m nor treatment for vaginitis, family planning services, pregnancy tests, prenatal counseling and referral, abortion counseling and referral. Emphasis is placed on helping women become better informed about their bodies and more assured about asking questions.

Teen Programs

H.A.P.P.Y (Health Action Prevention Project for Youth) - The teen program is carried out on the volunteer help of staff parents and others who have an interest in teenagers. The group discusses health problems such as drug abuse, VD, sex education and attitudes toward getting examinations. They are in the process of planning a health fair for teenagers in the neighborhood. Recreational activities are also planned.

Summer Youth Employment - In the summer of 1976 we received a state grant for youth employment. Our project called "Introducing Youth to the World of Work" concentrated on helping young people learn how to apply for jobs and how to function in a job situation. This in depth experience convinced us more than ever that public schools are not only failing but helping to foster negative attitudes toward work and achievement in low income youth.

Transportation - Project Go! began October 1976. We are the transportation site for residents in the entire Central Ward of Newark and a surburban area of the county. Senior citizens, handicapped people and other Title XX eligible people can arrange transportation by van to agencies, hospital clinics or other places they must go.

Neighborhood Preservation (new) - This project will provide a dollar for dollar grant to homeowners who want to rehabilitate their homes. Our responsibility will be to publicize the availability of the grants, counsel applicants on the availability of mortgage loans and to help negotiate loans from local lending institutions. The project may also expand to include absentee landlords as well.

Solar Energy Project (new pilot) - will train neighborhood people in an upcoming technology that is becoming more and more in demand· also will determine to what extent solar can reduce expenses for heating hot water. Public Service Gas and Electric Company will assist with providing collectors for one building and monitoring devices for two of the three pilot buildings.

III. A FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION AND REHABILITATION

The model must now be expanded.

The organization has been able to grow and develop new programs in spite of the changing turn of events nationwide. However it is clear that the rate of social and physical deterioration is catching up with our "oasis" and our attention must shift from maintaining existing programs to organizing the yet unorganized.

To make the entire 12 Square Block Area a viable neighborhood demands that attention to paid to five major areas of work:

1. Neighborhood organization and citizen participation
2. Physical rehabilitation
3. Employment and economic development
4. Family and social services
5. Technical Assistance and Coalition Building

As we have become involved in the neighborhood government movement, the focus is clearer on how to expand to a neighborhood wide approach.

An effective government deals with these aspects of living for its people Few if any local governments recognize or accept full responsibility. No state government even bothers to debate the issue.

People working in neighborhoods can redeem the cities. However, we must build models that have the capacity not only to survive but also to effect public support and change public policy.

The Citizens Union for Progress must become a corporation geared to redevelopment of the entire 12 Square Block Area.

It is also essential that the corporation become recognized by the city administration so that cooperative planning and implementation can be accomplished.

The Five Year Plan for Neighborhood Organization and Rehabilitation

	Objectives	Existing Resources
1. Neighborhood Organization and Citizen Participation	1. Tenant management committees to be established in buildings with absentee landlords who are willing to work with us. 2. 12 Square Block Assembly that meets on a regular basis to discuss problems and make plans for action. 3. Other committees and task groups as need arises. 4. Active block associations that deal with specific problems on that block. 5. Training for members of policy making groups.	1. Block Clubs 2. Amity Village Co-operative 3. Amity 2A Tenant Committees 4. West Side Park Citizen Committee 5. Tri-City Health Block Workers and Neighborhood Services Coordinator 6. Executive staff and board of Tri-City
2. Physical Rehabilitation	1. Property owners improvement fund 2. Cooperative maintenance services for property owners. 3. Rehabilitation of abandoned buildings 4. Technical assistance to businesses who need monies for improvements.	1. Tri-City maintenance and rehabilitation crew which can be expanded. 2. Mortgage reinvestment campaign against redlining 3. State neighborhood preservation project.

The Five Year Plan for Neighborhood Organization and Rehabilitation (con't)

	Objectives	Existing Resources
3. Employment and Economic Development	1. Develop neighborhood industries and spin-off businesses. 2. Provide work projects for youth. 3. Provide part-time work for people not capable of 40 hour work week. 4. Conduct economic surveys of cash flows in the neighborhood. 5. Conduct feasibility study of small industry. 6. Offer technical assistance and other incentives to potential businesses. 7. Training of neighborhood people to serve in managerial positions.	1. Tri-City: solar energy installation training insulation training extermination roofing All are capable of expansion into small businesses. 2. Manpower training projects 3. Rehab and maintenance offer the widest field for jobs.
4. Family and Social Services	1. Increase recreational activities for youth. 2. Establish a Family Services Center for information and referral to intensive counseling. 3. Adult classes for living.	1. Tri-City People's Center 2. West Side Park 3. Salvation Army Center
5. Technical Assistance and Coalition Building	1. Provide TA to groups with similar goals 2. Provide research and documentation to specify needs. 3. Organize support for policy changes. 4. Bring in and organize outside resources to help solve local problems.	1. Tri-City Board of Directors 2. National Association of Neighborhoods 3. Institute for Local Self Reliance 4. Trust for Public Land 5. Office of Newark Studies 6. Mayor's Policy and Development Office 7. Department of Community Affairs

Projected Budget for Core Staff and Operation

Executive Director	$ 21,375
Finance Director	18,500
Director of Economic Development	18,500
Administrative Assistant	12,000
Secretary	9,500
	79,875
Fringe (15%)	11,981
Total Personnel	91,856
Consultant/Contract	
Attorney	2,400
Audit	1,500
Staff Travel ($300 per month)	3,600
Space ($250 per month)	3,000
Utilities Communication	
Telephone ($200 x 12 mo.)	2,400
Electric & Gas ($75 x 12 mo.)	900
Fuel ($100 x 10 mo.)	1,000
Water ($25 x 4 quarters)	100
Consumables	
Office ($75 x 12 mo.)	900
Maintenance ($25 x 12 mo.)	500
Food	240
Other Expenditures	
Insurance (shared)	600
Maintenance & Repair	500
Program	1,000
Conferences and Publications	500
Miscellaneous	500
Equipment Purchase	1,500
	112,996

Newark Assn.

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